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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/654,962	09/05/2003	Stephen A. Mastro	84,155	7941

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Office Of Counsel, Code 39
Naval Surface Warfare Center
Carderock Division
9500 MacArthur Boulevard
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EXAMINER

STRIMBU, GREGORY J

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3634

DATE MAILED: 04/13/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Election/Restrictions

Claims 17-21 are withdrawn from further consideration pursuant to 37 CFR 1.142(b) as being drawn to a nonelected invention, there being no allowable generic or linking claim. Election was made **without** traverse in the reply filed on February 1, 2006.

Drawings

The drawings are objected to because the term "TDR in figure 1 is unnecessary since the element has already been identified by the reference character "30". Finally, the drawings are objected to because they fail to show the invention with the proper cross sectional shading when showing the invention in cross section. For example, figure 3 shows a cross section of the gasket without including any cross sectional shading indicating the material from which the gasket etc. are made. See MPEP 608.02. Corrected drawing sheets in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. Any amended replacement drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. The figure or figure number of an amended drawing should not be labeled as "amended." If a drawing figure is to be canceled, the appropriate figure must be removed from the replacement sheet, and where necessary, the remaining figures must be renumbered and appropriate changes made to the brief description of the several views of the drawings for consistency. Additional replacement sheets may be necessary to show the renumbering of the remaining figures. Each drawing sheet submitted after the filing date of an

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application must be labeled in the top margin as either "Replacement Sheet" or "New Sheet" pursuant to 37 CFR 1.121(d). If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Specification

Applicant is reminded of the proper language and format for an abstract of the disclosure.

The abstract should be in narrative form and generally limited to a single paragraph on a separate sheet within the range of 50 to 150 words. It is important that the abstract not exceed 150 words in length since the space provided for the abstract on the computer tape used by the printer is limited. The form and legal phraseology often used in patent claims, such as "means" and "said," should be avoided. The abstract should describe the disclosure sufficiently to assist readers in deciding whether there is a need for consulting the full patent text for details.

The language should be clear and concise and should not repeat information given in the title. It should avoid using phrases which can be implied, such as, "The disclosure concerns," "The disclosure defined by this invention," "The disclosure describes," etc.

The abstract of the disclosure is objected to because the phrase "is provided" on line 1 can be easily implied and therefore should be deleted. Correction is required.

See MPEP § 608.01(b).

Claim Objections

Claims 2 and 15 are objected to because it appears that the recitation "wire" on line 2 should be changed to --wires--. Appropriate correction is required.

Double Patenting

The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the "right to exclude" granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. A nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting rejection is appropriate where the conflicting claims are not identical, but at least one examined application claim is not patentably distinct from the reference claim(s) because the examined application claim is either anticipated by, or would have been obvious over, the reference claim(s). See, e.g., *In re Berg*, 140 F.3d 1428, 46 USPQ2d 1226 (Fed. Cir. 1998); *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) or 1.321(d) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent either is shown to be commonly owned with this application, or claims an invention made as a result of activities undertaken within the scope of a joint research agreement.

Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

Claims 1, 2 and 7-9 are rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claim 5 of U.S. Patent No. 6,879,256 in view of Minor et al. Claim 5 of U.S. Patent No. 6,879,256 sets forth the invention recited in claims 1, 2 and 7-9 but for a seal integrity verification assembly.

However, Minor et al. discloses a watertight door seal integrity verification system comprising: a gasket 10 configured to be disposed around a periphery of a watertight door, the gasket configured to be compressed upon closing of the watertight door; a transmission line 18 embedded in the gasket and a time domain reflectometry device 24 configured to be operatively coupled to the transmission line.

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It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to replace the switches of claim 5 of U.S. Patent No. 6,879,256 with the seal integrity verification system of Minor et al., to determine if the entire seal is properly compressed when the door is in the closed position.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 10-14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Minor et al. Minor et al. discloses a watertight door seal integrity verification system comprising: a gasket 10 configured to be disposed around a periphery of a watertight door, the gasket configured to be compressed upon closing of the watertight door; a transmission line 18 embedded in the gasket and a time domain reflectometry device 24 configured to be operatively coupled to the transmission line.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1, 2 and 7-9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rowe et al. in view of Minor et al. Rowe et al. discloses a watertight door 50 in a door frame 44; a gasket 10 disposed in a channel 58 formed around the periphery of the door; a closure edge of the door frame 46 positioned to compress the gasket upon latching the door shut. Rowe et al. is silent concerning a seal integrity verification system.

However, Minor et al. discloses a seal integrity verification assembly comprising a gasket 10, a transmission line 18 embedded in the gasket, the transmission line operatively coupled to a time domain reflectometry device 24; and a display (not shown, but see column 5, lines 60-61) associated with the time domain reflectometry device to indicate a gasket compression status.

With respect to claim 2, Minor et al. discloses twisting conductors to increase the consistency of the resistivity of the conductor along its length (see column 10, lines 10-12) and the use of insulated wire (see example 8). Accordingly, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to twist the insulated wires to increase the consistency of the resistivity of the conductor along its length.

Claim 3 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rowe et al. in view of Minor et al. as applied to claims 1, 2 and 7-9 above, and further in view of Wilson. Wilson discloses a TDR having a coaxial transmission line (see column 4, lines 9-11).

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It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to provide Rowe et al. in view of Minor et al., with a coaxial transmission line, as taught by Wilson, to reduce the amount of space required for the transmission line.

Claims 15 and 16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Minor et al. as applied to claims 10-14 above, and further in view of Wilson. Wilson discloses a TDR comprising a coaxial cable 13 comprising twisted insulated conductors. See column 4, lines 9-15).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to provide Minor et al. with a conductor, as taught by Wilson, to reduce the amount of space required for the transmission line.

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Dauber et al. is cited for disclosing a seal having a time domain reflectometry device. Gimard et al. and Westwell are cited for disclosing a system for determining if a seal is properly compressed. Cobb, Heinzen and Nord are cited for disclosing sensor disposed within a seal.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Gregory J. Strimbu whose telephone number is 571-272-6836. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday 8:00 to 4:30.

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If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Richard Chilcot can be reached on 571-272-6777. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Gregory J. Strimbu". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end of the name.

Gregory J. Strimbu
Primary Examiner
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April 12, 2006